



May 19, 1997

Bunker Hill Superfund Update

Kellogg, Idaho

Project updates on haul road construction, yard remediations, Smelterville Flats, and the Central Impoundment Area (CIA).

Have you noticed increased activity around the Bunker Hill Superfund site and I-90? If not, you are likely to notice more activity soon - several Superfund construction projects have begun and will continue throughout the summer and early fall, until weather permits. This fact sheet is the first of a series of updates designed to keep the public informed about summer construction that will impact the community.

We're Moving Along on Schedule

The Idaho Division of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) estimates that in the next three-to-four years, over 100,000 50-ton truckloads of contaminated material will be transported from the Smelterville Flats to the Central Impoundment Area (CIA). In order to transport the material, a 7-mile haul road is being constructed. A separate haul road needs to be built because of the large volumes of traffic generated from this project, and to support the size of the trucks. IDEQ worked with the City of Smelterville, Shoshone County, impacted property owners, and state and federal agencies

to develop a haul road that minimizes impacts to property uses and ensures public safety.

Info About the Haul Road

(Please see Map 1)

In April, 1997, construction of the haul road began. The 18-inch thick gravel road will originate at the east end of Smelterville Flats, north of I-90, where trucks will be loaded with contaminated tailings from the Flats. The road will run west to the Pinhurst overpass, where trucks will cross under I-90. From there, the road will then head east to the CIA, where the tailings will be disposed.

After excavation of the Flats is completed in approximately two years, a portion of the road on the south side of I-90 will be paved to cap over any residual contaminants and will be used as an access road for the Silver Valley Industrial Park.

Potential Community Impacts of Haul Road Construction

Traffic: Normal traffic patterns should be minimally impacted by haul road traffic. Except by written permission of the proper authority, no public or private roads will be closed due to the haul road. Whenever the haul road obstructs public or private right-of-ways, IDEQ and EPA will provide safe detours for the public. All traffic detours will be coordinated with local officials, fire departments and affected private citizens. The bicycle and pedestrian path that is North of the CIA will be detoured to connect with the Smelterville interchange road.

Noise: All vehicles and equipment operating in the proximity of residential and commercial properties will be equipped with mufflers that conform to local and state control ordinances. A Noise Control plan has been developed to mitigate construction noise impacts as much as feasible.

Air Pollution: Air monitoring devices will be installed near the haul road to ensure that air quality standards are maintained. In addition, areas will be continuously monitored for high levels of dust and frequently watered down or otherwise treated to minimize dust.

Runoff, Flood Control: Contractors will be complying with state guidelines regarding pollution control at construction sites. Such controls include a phased clearing and grading plan, and erosion and sediment controls to handle runoff. Water quality monitoring equipment will be installed on the SFDCR at three locations - one upstream of the work area, one downstream of the work area and one at the point of discharge of water into the SFDCR.

If you have any concerns about the haul road and truck traffic, please contact Nancy Wilson at 1-800-424-4372 or Jerry Cobb at 1-208-783-0707.

Yard Remediation Update

(Please see Map 2)

Since 1986, EPA and the Upstream Mining Group (UMG) have remediated over 1000 properties in Smelterville, Pinehurst and Kellogg. Recently, there have been a lot of questions regarding the schedule for yard remediation and the process by which yards are selected. Following is brief summary of how yards are selected for remediation.

Based on a Consent Decree between EPA, IDEQ and the UMG, UMG is required to excavate 200 contaminated properties a year that sample for greater than 1000 pm lead, until all contaminated

properties are remediated within the site. Yards are prioritized for remediation within a "target area." A target area sampling for higher levels of lead will be scheduled for remediation first. For example, the City of Smetlerville was remediated first because it sampled higher for overall lead contamination. Although, properties are remediated in the order of "target area", the ONLY exceptions are high risk properties. High risk properties are remediated whether in a target area or not. A high-risk property is defined as any property within the site in which children less than 6-years-old reside permanently, a property in which a pregnant woman resides, or a licensed day-care facility with children less than 6-years-old. These are the only criteria for identifying high risk yards.

Yards are remediated by "block" to ensure that there is no recontamination of cleaned properties. Therefore, UMG is usually remediating both high risk and non-high risk yards at the same time, block by block. **As outlined in the Consent Decree with UMG, every property testing for greater than 1000 pm lead will be remediated.**

With DEQ oversight, the Upstream Mining Group samples soils at properties within a scheduled target area. Each year, UMG creates a work plan that includes target areas for sampling and target areas for cleanup. In 1996, UMG sampled Kellogg's properties and now in 1997, Kellogg is undergoing cleanup. This summer, UMG will be sampling yards in Wardner, Page, and Ross Ranch.

If your property is scheduled for remediation this year, you have already been notified. If you have not been notified by DEQ or the Upstream Mining Group that your property has soil with greater than 1000 ppm lead, then your property is not scheduled for remediation this year.

If property is scheduled for remediation, DEQ UMG and the property owners conduct a "walk thru" together to talk about the project. DEQ provides a general time-frame for remediation and then personally notifies property owners of

impending excavation at least one week prior to the beginning of the project.

*** In general, each yard takes about three weeks to excavate and fill and property owners can continue to live at the residence throughout the project.**

Smelterville Flats Design

Excavation of the mine tailings in the Smelterville Flats is scheduled to begin this summer at the south side of I-90. Excavation will occur over two summers - 300,000 yards of tailings is expected to be removed this year and up to 1.2 million yards will be removed over the next year or two from the northside of I-90.

After the tailings are removed from the Flats, grading will take place using existing, non-contaminated fill and some clean fill. The area will be revegetated with new upland, wetland, and riparian vegetation. The goal is to stabilize the area by establishing sustainable vegetative communities.

Stream banks will be protected from erosion through the use of various techniques. Rip rap (rocked river banks) will be used in areas of high velocity river water. Others areas will be vegetated with willows in combination with other bank stabilization techniques including smaller rock covers and burlap. Flood plain areas that are not at high risk to erosion will be covered with topsoil and seeded.

Central Impoundment Area

The Central Impoundment Area, located east of the site, encompasses an area of about 200 acres. As stated above, the CIA will be the location for disposing Smelterville Flats tailings. The tailings will be graded to have a slightly sloped surface that will allow water to drain. The tailings will be then be covered with a liner to keep water from leaching through. Some of the CIA embankments will be regraded to lessen the steep slopes, and some of the tops of the embankments will be removed to allow water to drain over the side of the CIA. Some embankments of the CIA will be capped with rock others will be covered with topsoil and revegetated depending on slope. The purpose of this capping is to eliminate blowing dust and direct contact exposure for people.

Site History

The Bunker Hill Site spans 21 square miles in the heart of the Silver Valley in northern Idaho. The communities of Kellogg, Smelterville, Wardner, Pinehurst, Page, Ross Ranch and Elizabeth Park live within the site's boundaries, totaling over 6000 in population.

Mining activities began in the late 1800s in the Silver Valley, and in 1917 mining ore processing began at the Bunker Hill Site. In 1968, Gulf Resources and Chemical Corporation (Gulf) bought the Bunker Hill facility. In 1973, a fire at the Bunker Hill baghouse (a system of cloth bags that filtered lead-contaminated dust from the smokestacks) damaged the smelter's air pollution control capacity. As a result of the fire, lead emissions from the smelter increased dramatically. Less than a year after the fire, a sick child tested extremely high for lead. Local officials tested other children in the valley and many had very high levels of lead in their blood. As a result, the Centers for Disease and Control and the Idaho Panhandle Health District developed a lead intervention program and a yearly blood screening program to monitor area children.

Contamination includes the disposal of mine tailings that were deposited in the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River, causing major contamination of the river bed. Although the ground water sediments, soil and surface water are all contaminated with a variety of heavy metals from decades of mining, the primary contaminant is lead. Lead can cause brain and central nervous system damage, chronic kidney and cardiovascular disorders and impaired fetal development.

In 1981, as a result of a decrease in metal prices, Gulf shut down Bunker Hill processing and sold it to Bunker Limited Partnership (BLP). Although the mine and mill reopened for several years in the late 1980's, the smelter complex remained closed.

In 1983, Bunker Hill was added to the National Priorities List (NPL), a list of the nations most hazardous waste sites. EPA has identified 17 private companies believed to be responsible for site cleanup, some of whom who are working in partnership with EPA and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) to support cleanup.

Cleanup decisions are documented in two Records of Decisions (RODs). In 1991, the Populated ROD was signed, covering yard remediation. In 1992, the Non-Populated ROD was signed, documenting cleanup decisions for the rest of the Bunker Hill Site.



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***Superfund Fact Sheet
Bunker Hill Superfund Site***